

NEWSLETTER

JANUARY 2016

**Colwall
Village
Society**

Revealing Our Heritage

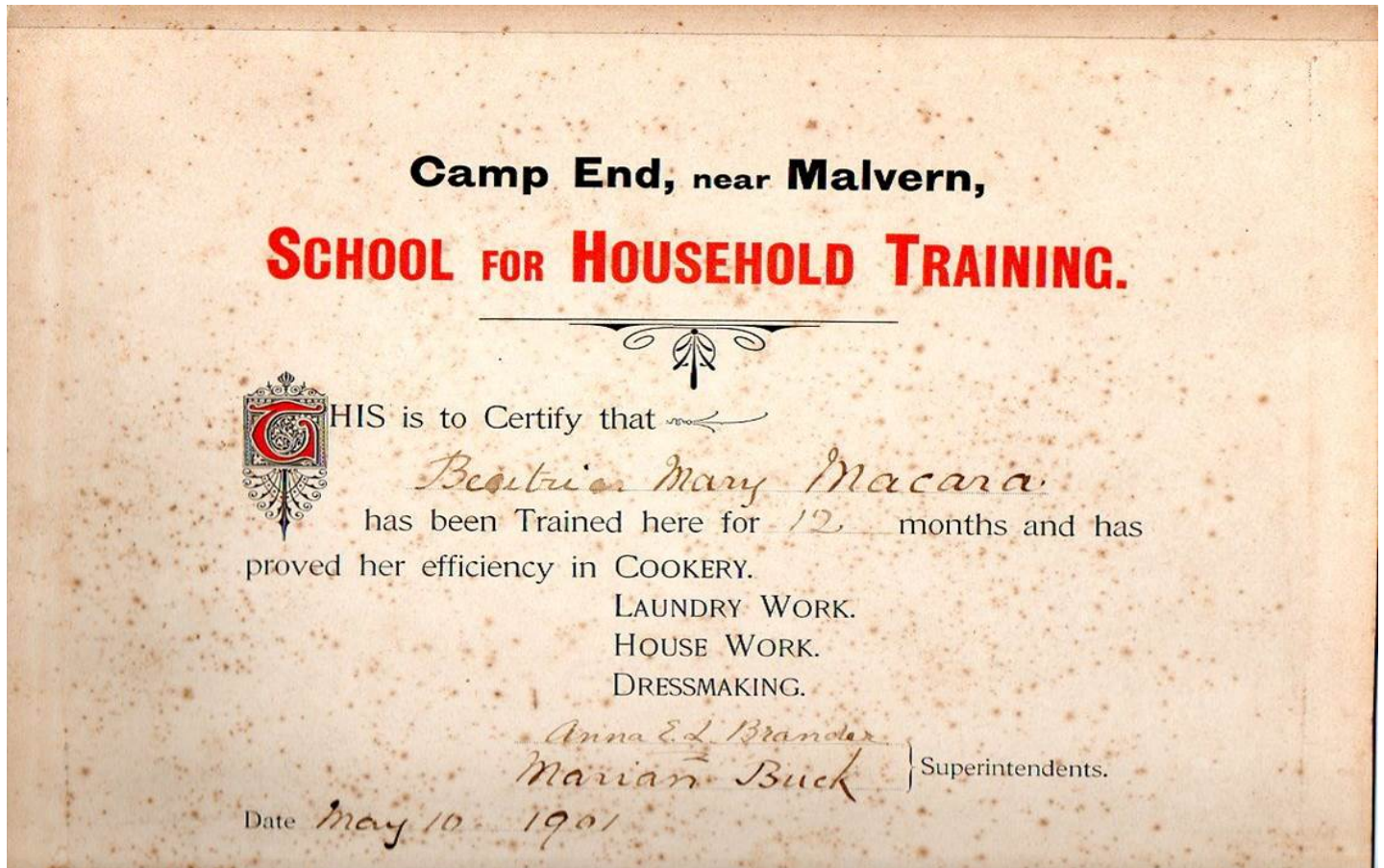


Evendine Court School

Its Origins at Camp End, Jubilee Drive by *Amanda Simons*

A study of the origins of Evendine Court connects two parishes of topical interest for Herefordshire VCH – Colwall, where research is currently being carried out, and Bosbury, where research has recently been completed.

It was in Colwall that a *Residential School for Household Training* as established in 1896, while it was in Bosbury that the school's founder, Mrs Buck, was to make her home and to become closely involved with the community, and where she died on June 2nd, 1947, at the age of 96.



Mrs Buck was born Marian Walker at Birstall near Leicester, the daughter of a boot and shoe manufacturer. An artist, a 'fearless climber' and traveller, she was passionate about teaching cookery, writing in her *North Midland School Cookery Book*, 'If you teach a girl order, method, cleanliness, and economical cookery, you lay the foundation of a good home – a blessing that cannot be overestimated.'

Marian Walker married Dr William Elgar Buck, and together they founded the *Leicester School of Cookery* in 1877, which became the *North Midland Training School of Cookery* in 1890. Widowed at the age of 43, she bought land near British Camp, having fallen in love with the area as a child when visiting Stanley Hill, Bosbury, with her father.

Her affection for the area would seem to be echoed in her cookery book with one recipe entitled *Jenny Lind Soup*, the 'Swedish Nightingale' soprano having died at Wynds Point in 1887.

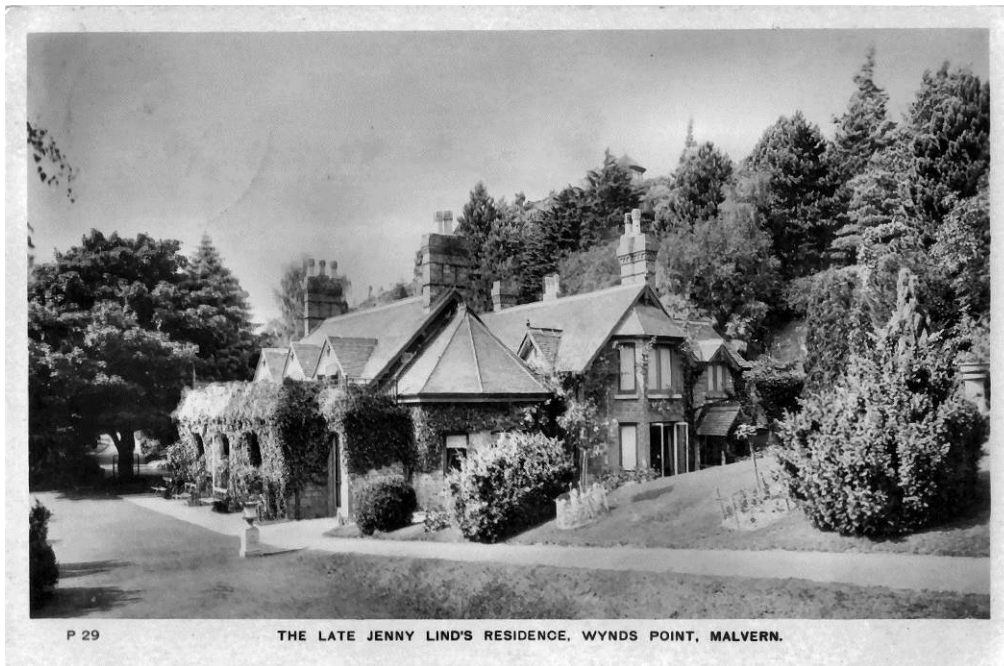
Jenny Lind Soup.

Ingredients.—Sago 1 teacupful.
 Milk $\frac{1}{2}$ teacupful.
 Stock 2 quarts.
 Eggs 2 yolks.
 Cloves 2
 Pepper and salt.

Method.—Soak the sago in cold water. Put the stock into a saucepan, when it boils, strain the sago and stir it into the stock, add cloves and simmer 1 hour. Beat the yolks in a soup tureen or basin and pour on the soup stirring all the time, add seasoning and serve at once.

A recipe from Mrs Buck's *North Midland School Cookery Book*, courtesy of Barry Sharples.

A few hundred yards from Wynds Point along Jubilee Drive, the scenic route which had been opened officially only a few years previously in 1889, Mrs Buck built a large L-shaped red brick house, *Camp End*, in which to house her new school. With breathtaking views westwards, the house overlooked a garden landscaped into the steep gradient of the hillside below, with stables and a gardener's cottage built alongside.



P 29

THE LATE JENNY LIND'S RESIDENCE, WYND'S POINT, MALVERN.

In her book written in 1986, *Ninety Years On: a history of Evendine Court*, Jean Butchart, former teacher and vice-principal, informs us that the purpose of the school was to remedy girls' ignorance of 'Household matters', their lack of knowledge being the result of the 'regular staff of servants' in their own homes doing all the work. The curriculum included 'Cookery, Housework, Elementary Hygiene, Laundry, Millinery, Dressmaking and the care of Household Linen'. Generally the courses ran for 6 weeks, Mrs Buck and fellow school founder Mrs Brander covering the bulk of the subjects, with a Miss Worthington teaching needlework.

Pupils' contemporary accounts suggest a happy, hard-working atmosphere with the girls taking turns to assume the roles of kitchen maids, parlour maids, housemaids and 'ladies'. Afternoons were free for 'walks, cycling and hay-making' or meeting to read aloud when it was wet, while there were lectures in the evenings. There were occasional days off for 'delightful expeditions to Worcester, Hereford and Tewkesbury'. The school at Camp End became quite a feature in the neighbourhood, pointed out by 'drivers of brakes' as they went past.

Today the house is owned by Steve and Sarah Wilson, Sarah having moved here as a child with her parents 50 years ago. Under the family's sensitive care, Camp End has retained the charm and atmosphere of its early years. The red-

tiled kitchen floor, described by a pupil as being 'bright and pleasant in appearance', remains so today along with the alcoves for the 'two ranges ... one for general use, the other to be used when the flues of the first are being cleaned'.

Beyond it is still the laundry where 'actual washing, with rinsing, mangling, hanging out to dry, and folding sheets' took place on Tuesdays and Wednesdays, while ironing day was Friday. Standing in the dining-room it is easy to picture the students whose turn it was to sweep and dust it at half-past seven every morning, and the porch could still be 'a delightful place to shell peas on a sunny day'.



By the end of 1900 the school's success meant it needed room to expand, so Miss Brander, on behalf of her fellow partners, bought land in Evendine Lane to build 'a large private house/farmhouse' and by 1902 the new school was ready to train ladies in 'Domestic Economy, Horticulture, Dairying and Poultry-keeping'.

Although the heart of the school was now in Evendine Lane, Camp End remained in use for some time, along with the Malt House, a property in Evendine Lane which was taken on for extra accommodation for 20 girls and was also used as a 'practice house'. By 1908 Mrs Buck had retired to Bosbury where she had had a hand in designing her home, The Noverings, which bore a resemblance to Camp End, and, indeed to Evendine Court. Despite her retirement, some twenty years later she was still returning to Evendine to give lectures in which she regaled her audience with 'hilarious anecdote about life at Camp End', and she retained a life-long interest in the school.

During the Second World War, Camp End temporarily entered into Evendine's life once more, being run as a finishing school for girls who would normally have gone abroad, with Miss Honor Bright of Barton Court as Principal, some lessons being taught by staff from Evendine. Because of lack of support it closed at the end of 1942 and became a convalescent home for victims of bombings in Bristol and Birmingham, with Mrs Buck taking a keen interest in the project until her death.

Along with a number of properties in Bosbury, Mrs Buck bequeathed Camp End to her friend and companion, Janet Beith, and left land to Bosbury church to extend the churchyard and to erect a war memorial.

Evendine Court, later classified as a 'finishing school', continued to expand and prosper until the end of the century, finally closing in 1999.



Marion Percy receiving her British Empire Medal 25th October 2015

Future Talks

18th April 2016 [AGM] followed by a talk from Ron Shoemith on 'Alfred Watkin'.

20th June 2016

Gary Butler on 'The Restoration of the Ledbury Master's House'.

September 2016 – To Be Decided

January 2017 - To Be Decided

24th April 2017 – [Provisional Date]
[AGM]

From the Editor

If you are prepared to receive your newsletters by electronic means, please register with the email address below. Corrections and additions to the information in newsletters are always welcome, as are **CONTRIBUTIONS!**

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